



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

Marketing and Sales Management

FERESPE's Case Study

Final Assignment in the form of Internship Report
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by

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Abstract

No matter how competitive a particular industry may be, the essential will always be the collaboration and sharing of interests between the different parties. So, more than ever, it is absolutely crucial to exceed consumer expectations through innovative strategies that will ensure competitive advantages. Therefore, the maintenance and creation of good customer relationships have been a priority for every business as well as understanding which factors influence loyalty. In fact, this concept has been studied by several authors throughout the years. However, the definition of loyalty and what influences it is not consensual due to its complexity (Majumdar, 2005) (cited by Gee et al. (2008), p.360). That is why the purpose of this Master Final Work is to contribute, in theoretical and practical terms, to unveil what influences the loyalty of FERESPE's clients.

Furthermore, it is a valuable contribution to understand the main constructs of loyalty in order to improve marketing strategies and to achieve retention and creation of more and better relationships within customers.

Applying the proposed conceptual model, built upon literature review, it was concluded that providing a good experience is important as it affects customer satisfaction, delivers customer loyalty, instills confidence, supports the brand and also creates emotional bonds with customers (Kong, 2011).

Keywords: Relationship Marketing, Customer Relationship Management, Business-to-Business, Customer Loyalty, Trust, Commitment, Service Quality and Communication

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	ii
Abstract	iv
List of Figures	ix
List of Tables.....	xi
Chapter 1	13
1. Introduction	13
Chapter 2.....	15
2. Literature Review and Proposed Conceptual Model	15
2.1 Relationship Marketing and Customer Relationship Management (CRM).....	15
2.1.2 Customer Loyalty	15
2.1.2. Customer Loyalty Antecedents	18
2.1.2.1. Trust	18
2.1.2.2. Commitment	19
2.1.2.3. Customer Satisfaction	20
2.1.2.4. Service Quality	21
Proposed Conceptual Model.....	24
Chapter 3	27
3. Methodology	27
Chapter 4	29
4. Case Study.....	29
4.1 Company Presentation	29
4.2 Internship Context.....	32
4.2.1 Database: Companies, Fairs, Corporate Videos	33
4.2.2 Website	34
4.2.3 Customer Satisfaction Survey.....	38
4.3 Data Collection	39
4.3.1 Survey Structure.....	40
4.3.2 Global Analysis	40
4.4 FERESPE'S Client Journey Map.....	41

4.5 Discussion	42
5. Conclusion.....	45
5.1 Limitations and Future Research.....	47
Bibliography	48
Appendixes	55
Appendix 1 – FERESPE’s Customer Satisfaction Survey (English, French, Portuguese)	55
Appendix 2 – FERESPE’s Customer Satisfaction Survey Global Answers	56

List of Figures

Figure 1 - Airline Customer Journey Map retrieved from B2B market research agency.....	23
Figure 2 – Proposed Conceptual Model	25
Figure 3 – FERESPE at a glance	32
Figure 4 - FERESPE's Certifications.....	32
Figure 4 - FERESPE's former website layout	324
Figure 6 - FERESPE's former Website layout – quality, product and environment	35
Figure 7 - FERESPE's former Website layout - materials	36
Figure 8 - FERESPE's new Website layout	36
Figure 9 - Contents for the new Website – Energy – Oil&Gas	367
Figure 10 – Contents for the new website – Refining&Petrochemicals Industry.....	367
Figure 11 - FERESPE'S Customer Satisfaction Survey.....	369

List of Tables

Table 1 – FERESPE 2015 Billing by Country	30
Table 2 – FERESPE’s Client Journey Map	41

Chapter 1

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the competitive environment driven by the globalization of the economy and the rising customers' expectations for quality has made many companies organize their businesses around the customers they serve. However, in industrial markets, a great number of products have identical physical specifications (Mudambi et. Al, 1997). So, it is crucial for the seller to contrast its own product with competing ones and emphasize the unique aspects that make its product superior. This way, the seller may gain a competitive advantage over its competitors¹.

This is the challenge for FERESPE, a family-run foundry that manufactures high-alloy iron and high, medium and low-alloy steel - the so-called special irons - and exports more than 90% of its production. Despite its three decades of experience and the proved potential in the field, the company, in order to keep up with the new demands of the market, needed to create new ways to improve customer relationship management, as well as a new set of marketing communication actions to retain new and actual clients.

In this context, this Final Assignment in the form of Internship Report will provide the reader an insightful understanding about the company's background and in which markets the company operates. Likewise, it aims to follow the marketing actions, and to explore the strategic plan defined by the Commercial and Marketing Department - such as the creation of a new

¹<http://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/062415/why-product-differentiation-important-todays-financial-climate.asp> accessed in 28/11/2016

customer database and the participation in the elaboration of a new image for FERESPE's website.

This way, the research question is: **What influences customer loyalty in FERESPE's case?**

This dissertation is composed of four different parts. The Literature Review and Proposed Model chapter gives a theoretical framework about Relationship Marketing and Customer Relationship Management, in a business-to-business context. In addition to this, topics such as Customer Loyalty and Customer Loyalty Antecedents - Trust, Commitment, Satisfaction and Service Quality - are explored in order to obtain the theoretical foundation necessary to understand the phenomenon and subsequently respond to the research question.

The following chapter addresses the methodology chosen to carry out, which is a Case Study and the reasons why this method was chosen.

In the Case Study chapter, we can find important information about the company's history and background, as well as recent achievements. There will be a description of the main actions carried out during the five month internship: Customer Satisfaction Survey, Renewal of the new Website and creation of contents, New Databases and Benchmarking. Subsequently, an analysis to the results of the satisfaction survey will be done and also an analysis to the client journey map through the proposed conceptual model so that it will be possible to test it and answer the initial question.

Finally, the main conclusions and limitations of this study will be presented.

Chapter 2

2. Literature Review and Proposed Conceptual Model

Organizations have already realized that customers bring different economic values to the company, which is subsequently adapting its customer offerings and communication strategies accordingly, as well as understanding how to effectively manage relationships with customers. Therefore, this has become a very important topic to both academicians and practitioners in recent years (Reinartz, Krafft & Hoyer, 2004). In this regard and with the aim of better understanding those concepts, some literature about Relationship Marketing, Customer Relationship Management, Customer Loyalty and its antecedents was consulted.

2.1 Relationship Marketing and Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Grönroos (1989) (cited by Volkov (2004), p.113) states that marketing is to establish, maintain and enhance relationships with customers and other partners, at a profit, so that the objectives of the parties involved are met. This is achieved by a mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises. He also reinforced that the relationship marketing perspective is based on the notion that on top of the value of products and/or services that are exchanged, the existence of a relationship between two parties creates additional value for the customer and also for the supplier or service provider (Grönroos, 2004). It is important to

point out that the communication between parties is a crucial factor. If relationship marketing is to be successful, an integration of all marketing communication messages is needed to support the establishment, maintenance, and enhancement of relationships with customers (and other stakeholders) (Grönroos, 2004).

Research made by Coviello and Brodie (2001) shows that B2B firms are more relational in their approach to the market, whereas consumer firms are somewhat more transactional. This way, relationship marketing in the B2B context seeks to increase sales by building trust and engaging customers. Using a CRM system effectively allows a salesperson to quickly and consistently deliver what customers are looking for with each and every interaction, because their preferences and buying history are recorded. So, Kale (2003) (cited by Gee et al. (2008), p.367) defines CRM as the “holistic process of identifying, attracting, differentiating, and retaining customers”. Payne and Frow (2005, p.168) stated that CRM is “a strategic approach that is concerned with creating improved shareholder value through the development of appropriate relationships with key customers and segments. Unites the potential of relationship marketing strategies and IT to create profitable, long-term relationships with customers.”

So, it is important to stand out that taking into consideration the establishment of a relationship as well as an effective management is absolutely crucial because it allows firms to increase their customer loyalty.

2.1.2 Customer Loyalty

A business must promote or create loyal long-term relationships with profitable customers in order to achieve customer retention (Gee et al., 2008). This concept is very complex within academic fields. In fact, as Majumdar (2005) (cited by Gee et al. (2008), p.360) states, “customer loyalty is a complex, multidimensional concept”. Besides its complexity, Oliver (1997) (cited by Gee et al. (2008), p.360) defines loyalty as “a deeply held commitment to rebuy or (re)patronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior”. Several authors support the need for businesses to adopt a customer-centric vision because, according to Pfeifer (2005) (cited by Gee et al. (2008), p.360), “it costs five times more to acquire a new customer than to retain an existing one”.

Indeed, the lack of a homogeneously accepted definition of customer loyalty is reflected in the academic work that attempts to understand the key factors that generate customer loyalty (Gee et al., 2008). Moreover, in order to understand the benefits derived from customer loyalty, it is imperative to understand the antecedent drivers of loyalty (Terblanche and Boshoff, 2006) (cited by Gee et al. (2008), p.360). Thus, Rauyruen et al. (2007) assumed that to maintain customer loyalty to the supplier, the following aspects of relationship quality should be enhanced: **(1) trust, (2) commitment, (3) satisfaction and (4) service quality.**

2.1.2. Customer Loyalty Antecedents

2.1.2.1. Trust

Trust “is viewed as one of the most relevant antecedents of stable and collaborative relationships” (Akbar & Parvez, 2009). “Researchers had established that trust is essential for building and maintaining long-term relationships” (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998; Singh & Sirdeshmukh, 2000) (cited by Akbar & Parvez (2009), p.26). In a business-to-business (B2B) context, the degree of trust developed between companies is described by Ring (1996) (cited by Gounaris (2005), p.127) as a “critical element of economic exchange”. The more the customer trusts the supplier, the higher the perceived value of the relationship by the customer (Walter et al., 2002). In the perspective of Morgan and Hunt (1994) (cited by Donio, Massari & Passiante (2006), p.447) “trust is so important to relational exchange because relationships characterized by trust are so highly valued that parties will desire to commit themselves to such relationships”. On the other hand, Gounaris (2003) defend that the perceived service quality and customer bonding techniques used by the supplier are the two specific antecedents of trust and consequently customer commitment. These two antecedents have a direct influence on the level of trust, which in turn results in affective commitment. So, there is a causal relationship from trust to commitment. Lastly, Doney et al. (2007) (cited by Rodrigues and Faria, 2013) show that buyers assess trust building behaviors (social interaction, open communications, customer orientation) as well as tangible aspects of the service offering (technical, functional and economic quality) in order to gauge a service providing trustworthiness in a B2B service setting.

In conclusion, trust has a positive influence on key relational outcomes, loyalty, commitment and share of purchases (Rodrigues, 2013).

2.1.2.2. Commitment

Similarly to trust, commitment is considered as an important ingredient in successful relationships (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). The construct of commitment is regarded as central in the relationship marketing (Garbarino and Johnson 1999, Pritchard et al. 1999) (cited by cited by Rauyruen, Miller and Barrett (2006), p.3) as well as an indicator of relationship quality. In a business relationship, commitment is a psychological feeling of the mind through which an attitude concerning continuation of a relationship with a business partner is formed (Wetzels, de Ruyter and Birgelen, 1998) (cited by Rauyruen, Miller and Barrett (2006), p.3). Commitment dimensions are described by Gustafsson et al. (2005) as forward looking and a capture of the relationship's strength and resulting commitment for the future. Prior research distinguishes two types of commitment: Calculative and Affective Commitment. The first one is the rational and economic decision-making, reviewing costs and benefits. Commitment to a current brand or service is due to a lack of choice among similar products or services, or high-switching costs; the second one is a warmer and emotional factor, based on trust and commitment (Gustafsson et al., 2005).

In terms of the relationship between commitment and loyalty, Dick and Basu (1994) suggested that potential consequences of commitment may include word of mouth communications - an important aspect of attitudinal loyalty. Customers who have high commitment to a product or service will buy more. In other words, commitment leads to loyalty.

2.1.2.3. Customer Satisfaction

Kotler (1994) (cited by Magatef & Tomalieh, p.79) reasonably states that “the key to customer retention is customer satisfaction”. Evidence shows that there is in fact a link between satisfaction and customer retention and customer loyalty. Aaker (1991) and Heskett et al. (1997) (cited by Rauyruen, Miller and Barrett (2006), p.4) support that satisfaction is a determinant key to every level of brand loyalty. These authors propose that satisfaction is an important variable in explaining loyalty. According to Boselie, Hesselink, and Wiele (2002) (cited by Brown (2012), p.15), satisfaction is a positive affective state resulting from the evaluation of all aspects of a party’s working relationship towards another. Satisfaction is often thought to affect the likelihood of repurchasing or reusing the service of a provider. It is also often thought to affect the likelihood of repurchasing or reusing the service of a provider. Oliver (1997) proposes three dimensions of satisfaction: cognitive, affective and conative, which culminates in action loyalty or repeat usage.

Lam et al. (2004) (cited by Rauyruen & Miller (2006)) measured customer loyalty using two dimensions: recommendation and patronage. These authors found that customer satisfaction has a positive effect on only one dimension, which is recommendation. They could not support the other hypothesis. It appears that, in the study, customers were mainly driven by their affective state of satisfaction in what concerned recommending the service.

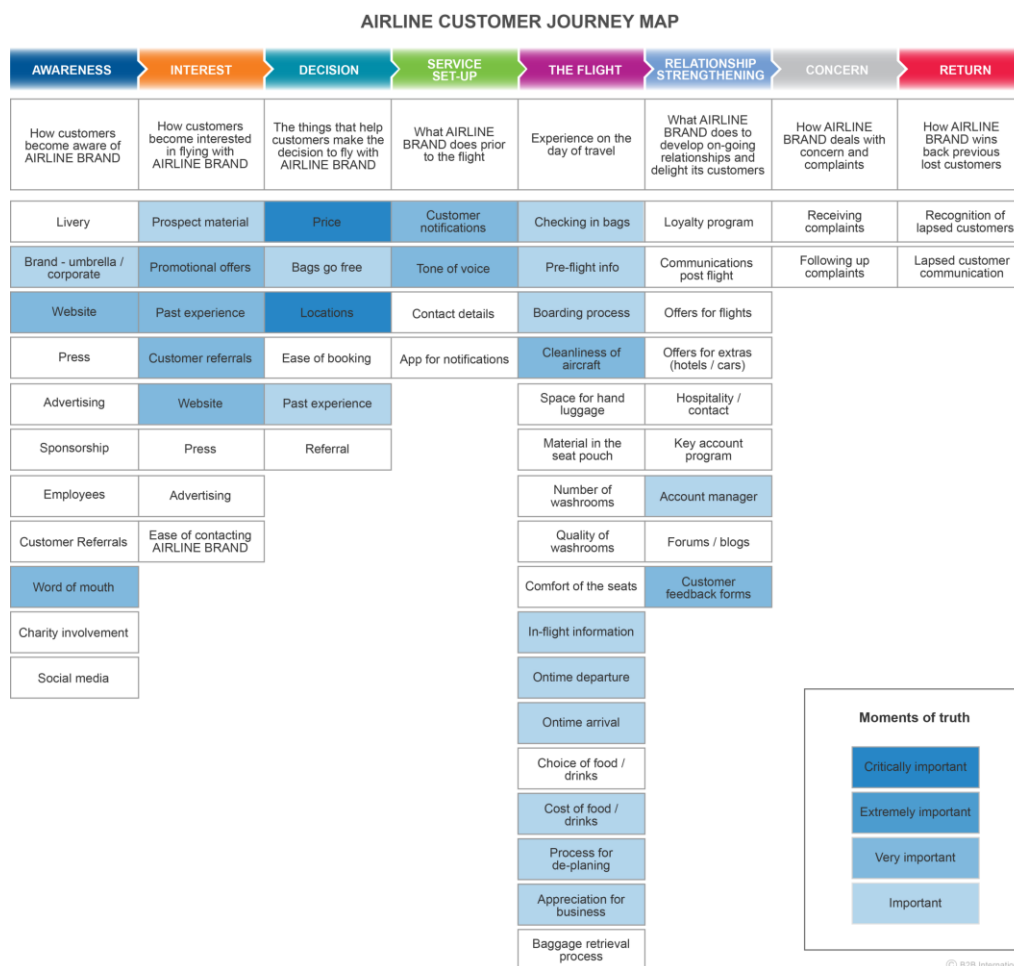
To conclude, Customer satisfaction is a customer’s overall evaluation of the performance of an offering to date (Johnson & Fornell, 1991) (cited by Gustaffsson, Johnson & Roos (2006), p.210).

2.1.2.4. Service Quality

Traditionally, Service Quality has been conceptualized as the difference between customer expectations regarding a service to be received and perceptions of the service being received (Grönroos, 2001; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988) (cited by Akbar and Parvez (2009), p.25). It is undeniable that Service Quality is a critical concern in B2B because of its impact on organizational customers (Molinari et al., 2008). "Service Quality is a key measure of organizational performance that remains at the forefront of both the marketing literature and the service marketing literature" (Jensen and Markland, 1996) (cited by Lassar, Manolis & Winsor, 2000). So, in order to accurately measure perceived quality, it is crucial to understand the antecedents, consequences and the methods to achieve a competitive advantage and build customer loyalty (Palmer and Cole 1995; Zahorik and Rust, 1992) (cited by Rauyren, Miller & Barret (2006), p.2) . Regarding this, Gounaris (2005) worked on the relationship between service quality and the customer's perception about the service delivered, once customer's evaluation of service quality and the resulting satisfaction/dissatisfaction is connected to (1) repurchase, (2) loyalty and (3) willingness to maintain a long-term relationship with the provider.

In addition to this, it has been confirmed that the relationship between perceived quality and customer loyalty exists and is positive (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993; Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Harrison-Walker, 2001) (cited by Rauyren, Miller & Barret, 2006, p.2). Firm and industry-level assessment of the quality-service loyalty link provides useful information to shareholders on the viability of future performance. Nonetheless, the majority of the empirical research has been limited to the area of retail and consumer services.

Effectively, there is a need to better understand the relationship of perceived quality and customer loyalty in other contexts, such as industrial markets and B2B markets (Rauyruen Miller & Barret (2006), p.3). However, in order to design great customer experiences, it is critical to understand the current customer experience by creating a Customer Journey Map (CJM) (figure 1), which is an ideal framework for the effect. CJM is described by Schmitt as “documents that visually illustrate customers' processes, needs, and perceptions throughout their relationships with a company”². It is a visual representation of customer interactions with a company and thus a tool to investigate, analyze and ultimately lay the foundations to improve customer experiences as it is possible to verify in the example (figure 1).



² <https://www.b2binternational.com/publications/customer-journey-mapping/> accessed in 01/02/2017

Figure 1 - Airline Customer Journey Map retrieved from B2B market research agency

Recent work has argued that, in every case, value is not embedded in a product at the moment of exchange, but rather obtained through use processes (Tynan et al. 2010; Vargo and Lusch, 2004) (cited by Lemke, Clark and Wilson (2011) p.7). Meyer and Schwager (2007) (cited by Lemke, Clark and Wilson (2011) p.5), for instance, define customer experience as customers' internal and subjective response to any direct or indirect contact with the company across multiple touch points.

Prior to purchase or service delivery, this "direct or indirect contact" includes the experience of marketing communications (Brakus et al. 2009) (cited by Lemke, Clark and Wilson (2011) p.5) and the experience of other customers through word of mouth (Kwortnik and Ross, 2007) (cited by Lemke, Clark and Wilson (2011) p.5), as well as the contextual experience of approaching the company or the encounter with the web medium within which a website is located (Sautter et al. 2004) (cited by Lemke, Clark and Wilson (2011) p.5).

Indirect contact after the service encounter includes the consumption experience, in which customers apply the product or service to meet their goals (Woodruff, 1997) (cited by Lemke, Clark and Wilson (2011) p.6). Providing a good experience is important because it affects customer satisfaction and delivers customer loyalty, influences expectations, instills confidence, and supports the brand (Lemke, Clark and Wilson, 2011).

To sum up, it is possible to state that "Customer Journey Mapping is an excellent tool, but to be effective it needs to be consistent with a complete customer focus framework if organizations are to maximize the value from it"³.

³ Retrieved from <http://www.customerchampions.co.uk/customer-journey-mapping-cjm/> accessed in 28/02/17

Proposed Conceptual Model

Understanding customer expectations and its needs was one of the dimensions of relational marketing used in the study by Evans and Laskin (1994), which had the objective of identifying what customers need and delivering services to the expected level. Taking into consideration the model established by these authors and according to the previous literature review based on Relationship Marketing and CRM, it is possible to summarize all the concepts that influence consumer loyalty: (1) trust, (2) commitment, (3) customer satisfaction and (4) service quality.

The main objective of this framework is to answer to the research question, What influences consumer loyalty in FERESPE's case?, by demonstrating the antecedents of loyalty: satisfaction, trust, commitment and service quality and the influence they have in the key concept. This model was based on the one used in the study of Antunes and Rita (2007), which had the objective of analyzing, through an integrated model, the role of the different dimensions of relational marketing and of the factors involved in customers' satisfaction and loyalty.

The delineation of the model is customized according to the individual characteristics of this type of company, given the specificity of the Iron and Steel sector. So, the present study suggests the following model (figure 2):

RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

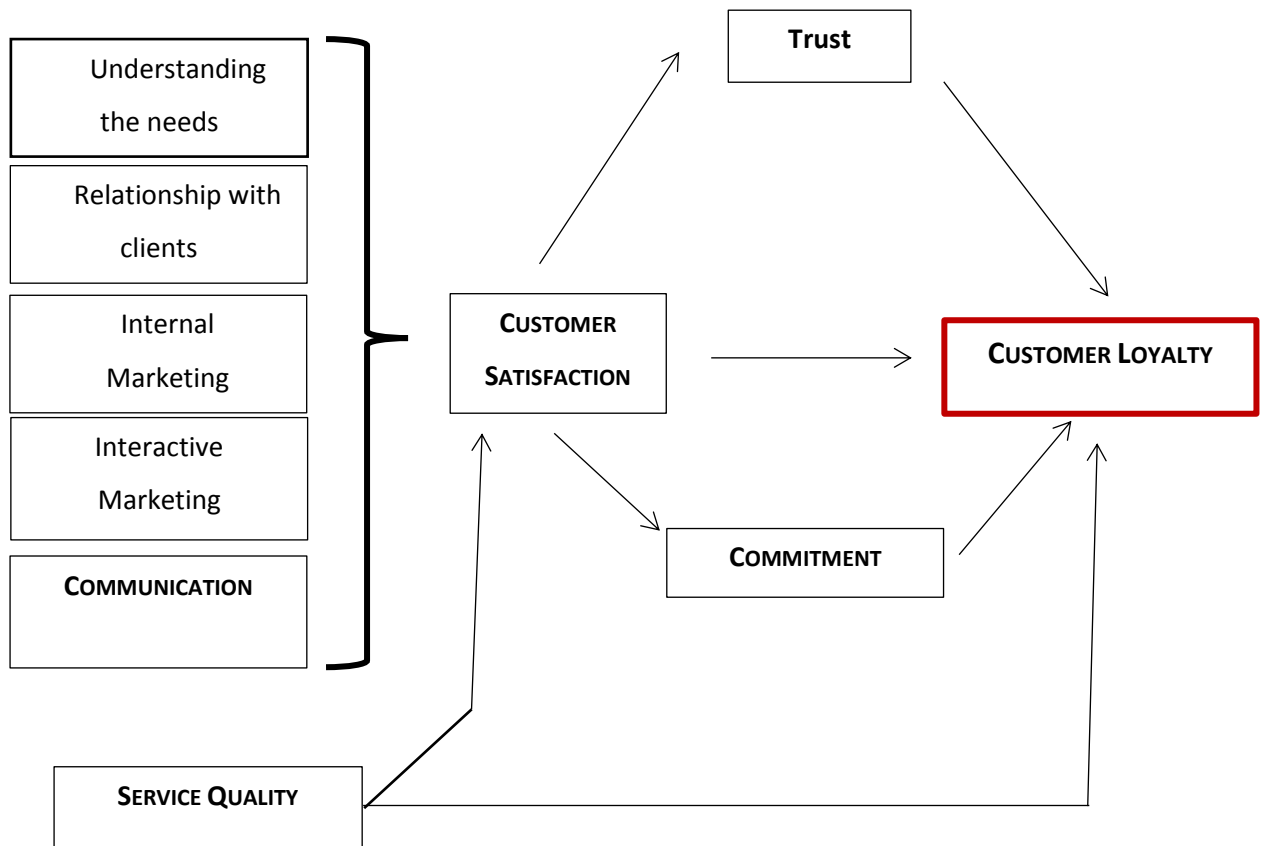


Figure 2 – Proposed Conceptual Model

The model shown in the previous figure represents the main constructs that have greater influence on the customer loyalty. First of all, it is possible to confirm that Relationship Marketing is based on the idea of enhancement, collaboration and maintenance of a relation with the client (Gronroos, 2004) as it was previously seen through literature review. In order to have a positive response from clients as far as relations are concerned, it is crucial that the company considers all these dimensions of relationship marketing (as it is shown in figure 2). Each one of them has a strong influence on engaging the consumer and all combined will help to achieve Satisfaction. Secondly, Customer Satisfaction is a key to retain and determine every level of loyalty. As

it was mentioned, on one hand relationship marketing influences this construct, but on the other hand customer satisfaction is also influenced by service quality. If the customer feels pleased with the service he will be satisfied. Afterwards, satisfaction will lead to trust and to commitment. Trust is, in fact, one of the most relevant antecedents of stability and collaboration in a relationship. If there is trust between parties, clients will commit themselves to such relationships. Consequently, Commitment is an essential indicator of relationship quality, which means customers with a high level of commitment will buy more.

To conclude, all these constructs combined will help to promote/create long-term relationships.

Chapter 3

3. Methodology

This dissertation was carried out in the context of a five month curricular internship at FERESPE – Fundação de Ferro e Aço. The main goal was to acquire skills and experience in the work context, in order to put into practice previously developed competences acquired at an academic level.

Subsequently, and in order to answer the research question “What influences customer loyalty in FERESPE’s case?”, the method that will be chosen to carry out this work is a Case Study.

A “Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g. observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports, and reports a case description and case themes)” (Creswell, 2013:97). In this particular case, an Explanatory Case Study will be used “to explain the causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies” (Yin, 1994:15). This method was chosen because there would be no time for the trainee to see the implementation and the result of the solutions proposed for the initial problem.

This dissertation will be carried out in two distinct phases. The first one will be based on the diagnosis of the company situation and the analysis of existent problems and on the definition of remedial measures needed, based on the previously investigated concepts, in order to solve the existent problems. As the trainee has had access to key information’s provided by the company and as this internship was focused essentially in CRM, it was possible for the trainee to

perceive which tasks were put into practice prior to its entry, analyzing what could be done to possibly improve the firm's performance in the future.

Chapter 4

4. Case Study

4.1 Company Presentation⁴

FERESPE is a “jobbing foundry” based in Ribeirão, Vila Nova de Famalicão, founded by Engineer Jorge Macedo Casais, in 1981. Since its creation the founder has had a clear strategy: focusing on the production of technical parts for high abrasion resistance application, as white cast iron alloy and alloy cast steels, also known as special irons [from which derived the name “FERESPE”], in order to fulfill the needs of a practically inexistent market⁵. With a team of 78 employees, the company currently focuses essentially on the production of technical parts for high performance applications, using the following alloys: Duplex, super-duplex and super-austenitic stainless steels, Medium and low alloy steels and High-alloy cast irons. In 2015, produced 96,150 pieces, 600 tons, 6.5 million euros of turn-over and 5.9 million euros in exportation volume.

The company operates essentially in the Energy, – Oil & Gas, LNG & Cryogenics, Refining & Petrochemicals, Chemical, Nuclear Power, Railway, Marine & Shipyard, Pulp & Paper and, Mining, and Water & Wastewater Industries and positions itself in a small and medium series niche market. Plus, FERESPE strategically chose to place its products in the foreign market through business relations with The Netherlands, France, Austria, Belgium, Germany, UK, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, Norway, Spain and the USA. In,

⁴ Source: FERESPE website. Available at: www.ferespe.com (accessed at October 2016)

⁵ Source: Text nº4: “Uma Nau em Oceano Azul” (accessed at October 2016)

2015 the company the company earned about 6,412,144.98€ as it is possible to perceive from table 1.

Country	Euro
Austria	1,132,641.77 €
Belgium	0.00 €
Denmark	138,072.77 €
France	1,543,773.60 €
Germany	602,827.17 €
Ireland	1,775.00 €
Italy	423,353.82 €
Netherlands	1,901,238.75 €
Portugal	532,685.48 €
Spain	1,034.30 €
Switzerland	53,221.94 €
UK	51.203.86 €
EUA	30,316.52 €
TOTAL	6,412,144.98 €

Table 1 - FERESPE 2015 Billing by Country

The company has achieved an important milestone when it obtained ISO 9001 certification, which constitutes proof of the company's credibility and also its capacity to innovate and to keep up with the markets' development. That's why one of the mottos of the company is "Always Ahead".

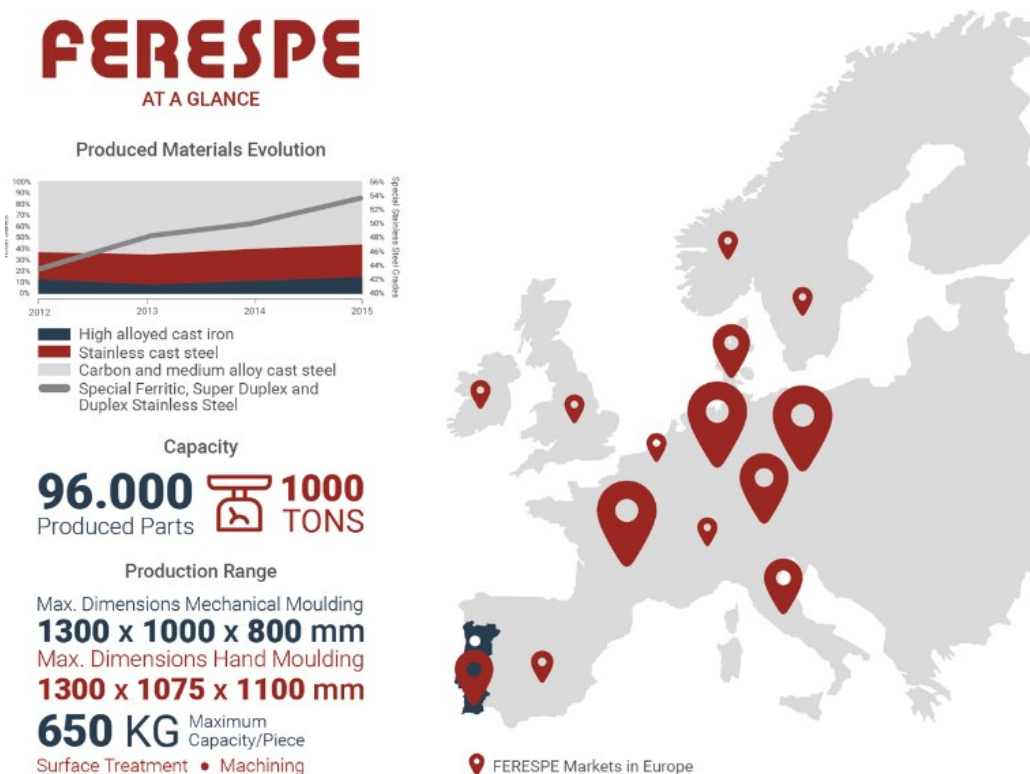


Figure 3 – FERESPE at a glance

Besides its vast experience in the foundry world, there was a need to know the real and current needs of its customers, since these are constantly changing. So, it is crucial for the company to unveil the major influencers of customer loyalty in order to retain old customers or attract new ones.

FERESPE's mission is to be positioned in niche markets characterized by high quality standards, full compliance with the delivery times agreed with its customers, small and medium series request and great versatility/flexibility in the supply of ferrous alloys.

In terms of vision, the company wants to be recognized as a leader in this niche market by all of its business partners. The organization is guided by the following values: Knowledge & Experience, Confidence & Reliability, Quality, Partnership, Safety, Ethics and Sustainability. In order to stand out among competitors FERESPE's identifies a set of factors that if met will ensure the success of the company: high quality standard niche market, full

commitment to delivery dates, high versatility/flexibility of produced alloys, anticipation of market needs, looking “always ahead” and continuous improving.

FERESPE’s Quality, Environment and Safety Policy is directly connected to its Customers and to internal and external organizational environment. This is reflected in the Satisfaction of their Customers and other interested parties, including environmental protection and health and safety working conditions for their employees.

The achieved Certifications and Qualifications represent true commitment to Quality and consolidate the global solutions to Customers. In fact, they assure further enhance reliability within each market, increasing competitiveness through quality differentiation and helping improving



customer satisfaction

Figure 4 - FERESPE's Certifications

4.2 Internship Context

The purpose of this chapter is to understand how effective the marketing and CRM tools are when used by the company in order to understand what factors really influence customer loyalty in this case. This way, the first step is to analyse the main communication and marketing actions, identifying certain items considered fundamental aspects that promote loyalty. From this identification and analysis of the company’s actions, it is intended to pinpoint a set of key points where the company can improve.

4.2.1 Database: Companies, Fairs, Corporate Videos

The tasks performed during the period working in the company focused mainly in CRM by creating and managing new databases.

In a first phase, the trainee did a benchmark of different websites of the companies operating in the same industrial sector in order to get to know the industry [and to further help in the construction of the website].

After that, it was given information about actual, potential and former clients of the company along with other operation companies in order to nourish the database about the organizations. This database included the name of the company, its description, the cluster it belongs to, a link to the website and country / city, and for some of the companies, the correspondent 2016 commercial relevance.

Secondly, it was done a benchmark of the conferences, trade fairs and exhibitions, in Europe, that could be relevant for the company to be attended or to participate in. In this database, there was information about the name of the fair/exhibition, the theme, the cluster it belonged to, date, no. of visitors / exhibitors, country / city, link to the website and price / area / m2. In a last phase, the intern was asked to create a database of corporate videos used by different companies. This base was created with the purpose of gathering a set of information about other companies / competitors so that FERESPE could create a new corporate video, which was more current and suitable to current times.

All this information along with some other provided by the company was managed by the trainee.

4.2.2 Website

Since the beginning of the internship, the commercial and marketing department had a clear strategy: to improve the online communication of the company. So, the trainee was asked to analyse this issue in terms of the official webpage – www.ferespe.pt.

It was immediately evident that the website was old-fashioned as it is possible to perceive by the image bellow (figure 5). Regarding the visual aspect of the page, the colour pallet used was not very appealing, making it difficult to read the contents. Also the background was too dark (black with white lettering) and with a dark background image. Very long and dense texts could be found, making it difficult to capture the attention of the reader making it also difficult for readers to use the tablet and, especially, the mobile phone. It was not very iterative, there was a lack of images and they did not present clearly the materials produced (no pictures were displayed) (figure 6 and 7).

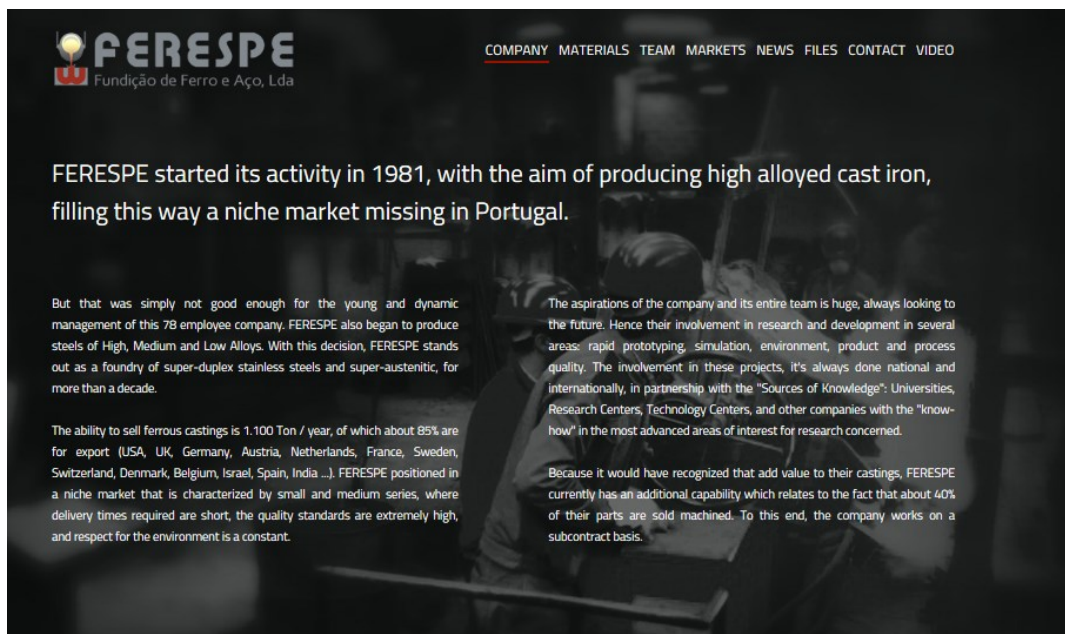


Figure 5 - FERESPE's former Website layout

So, the trainee immediately started to work along the head of commercial and marketing department and the communication agency in order to change the website and make it more modern (figure 8). During this work, the trainee was able to give her insights about what worked or not in terms of online communication as well as the visual aspect of the website. In addition, the trainee created all the contents and texts for the new website – www.ferespe.com (figure 9 and 10).



Figure 6 - FERESPE former website - quality product and environment

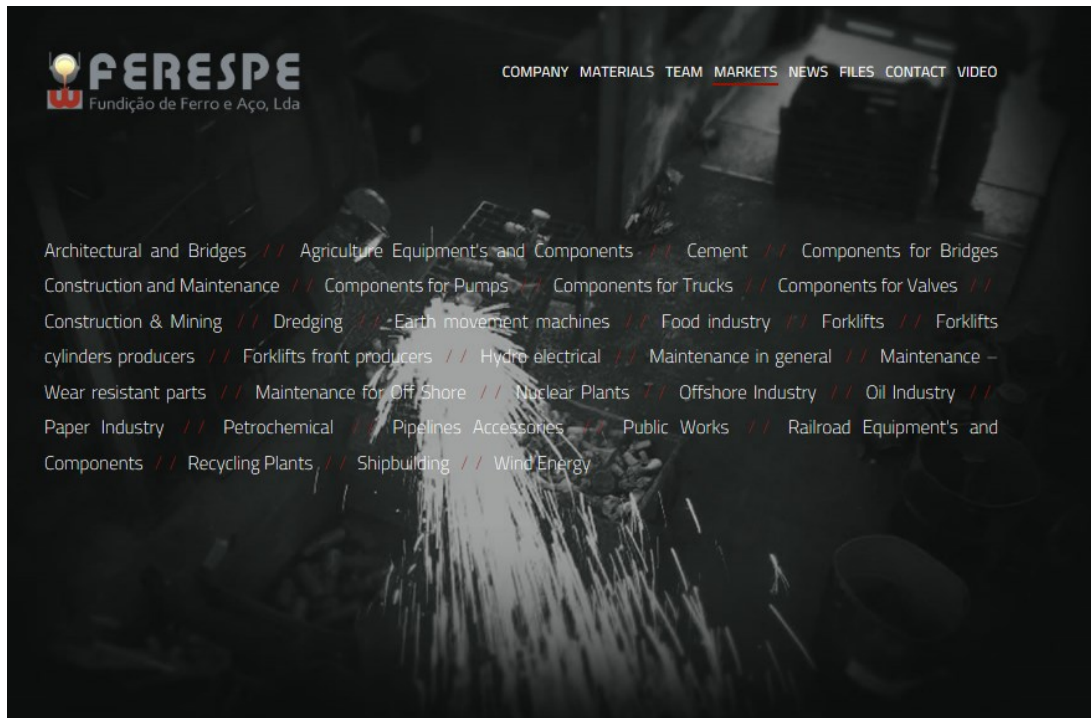


Figure 7 - FERESPE former website - materials

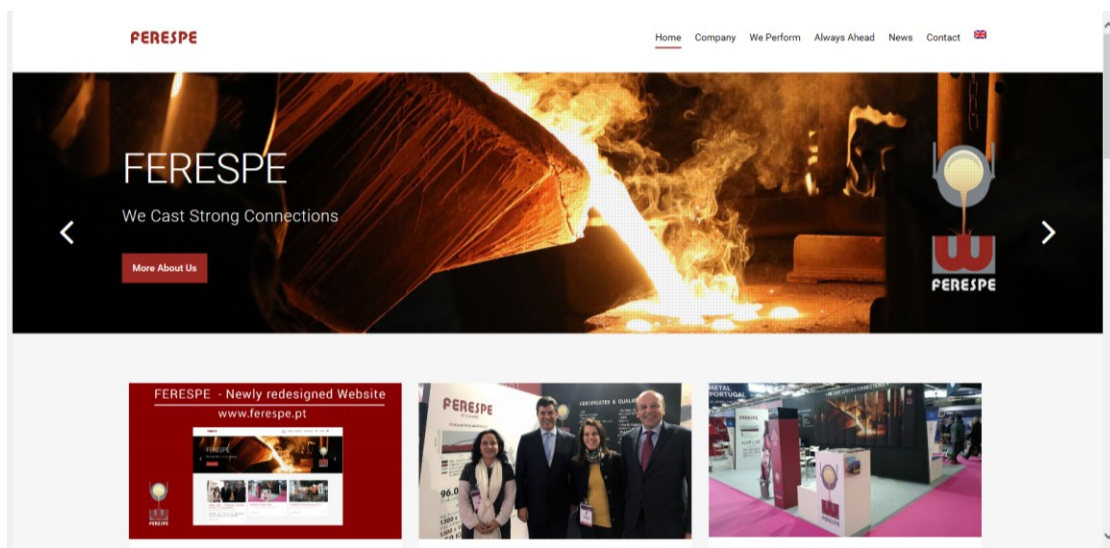


Figure 8 - FERESPE's new Website layout

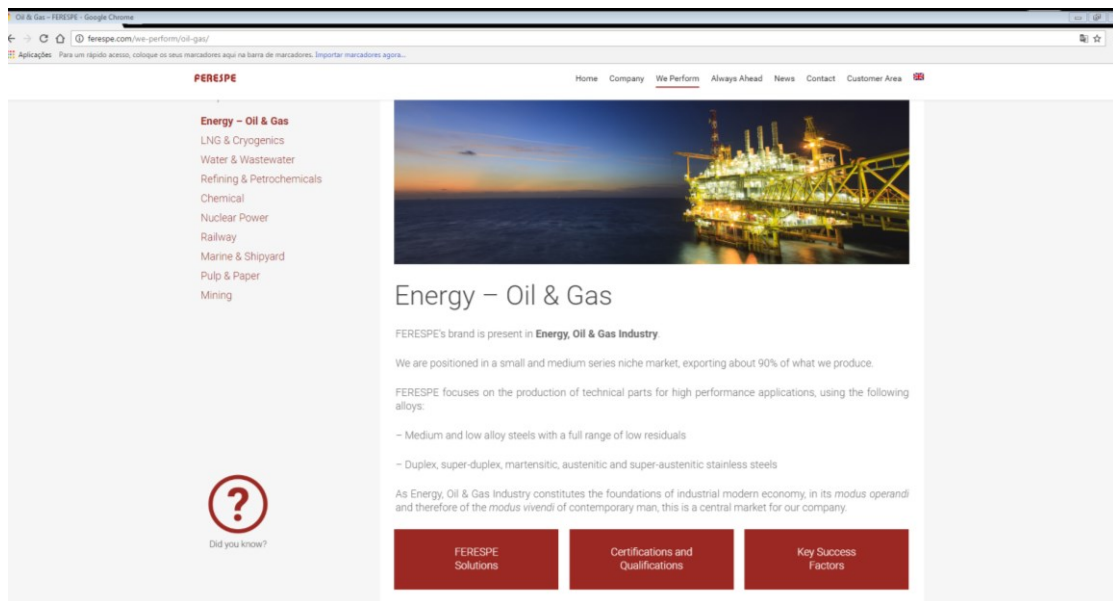


Figure 9 - Contents for the new Website - Energy – Oil&Gas

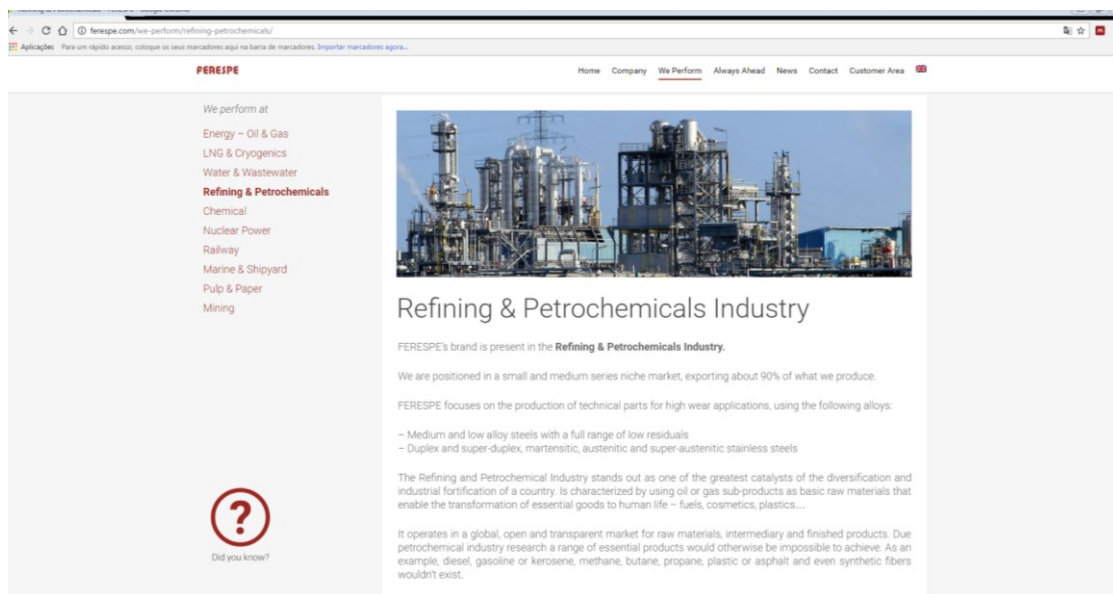


Figure 10 - Contents for the new Website - Refining & Petrochemicals industry

4.2.3 Customer Satisfaction Survey

The current competitive environment, driven by the growing expectations for quality, has led companies to orient their business around customer needs. As it is evident, clients are a valuable asset to any organization and the evaluation of their satisfaction is crucial. So, the company decided to evaluate the degree of satisfaction of the customers through the application of an online survey.

The trainee had the opportunity to participate in the whole process of preparing the survey – from following the definition of the methodology, to the creation and application of the survey, to the management and control of the results and also the elaboration and analysis of the final report of the survey.

It was decided to evaluate the degree of satisfaction of the FERESPE Customers through the application of an online questionnaire, created in Google Forms, in order to be easy and fast to understand, to fill and to send. In the construction of this survey, the following evaluation criteria were considered as most relevant: the degree of satisfaction of Clients with respect to technical competence and experience, quality of follow-up of ongoing projects, response time to requests - Budget Requests, Orders and Complaints - Quality of the product and evaluation of the degree of general satisfaction with FERESPE. The structure of the survey was entirely decided by the head of marketing and commercial department.

Another concern was that these choices should be clear and allow a rapid response to the stakeholders targeted by the Survey, which in previous experiences had shown difficulties of availability in this context. The online option was, therefore, designed to facilitate this perception right away.

4.3 Data Collection

The company decided that the survey would be sent to the main FERESPE Clients (79), and a total of 88 respondents were selected. The surveys were sent by email taking into consideration the language of the respective Customer - Portuguese, English or French.

Until January 17 of 2017, FERESPE registered a total of 33 surveys answered, which corresponds to a Response Rate of 41%. The company chose to re-send the surveys in two new additional phases from November 9 of 2016 to January 17 of 2017. The collected data were subjected to a quantitative and qualitative analysis.

The structure of the survey was entirely chosen by the company, so the trainee did not participate in the decision.

The screenshot shows a web-based survey titled "FERESPE – Customer Satisfaction Survey". It includes a header with the FERESPE logo and the text "STRONG CONNECTIONS". The survey asks for a rating of satisfaction with various aspects of the service. The rating scale is: Very satisfied, Somewhat satisfied, Somewhat dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied. The survey includes a table for rating different aspects of the service, a text box for a testimonial, and a progress bar at the bottom.

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Experience and Knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Monitoring of ongoing projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Response Time on Budget Requests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Response Time to Orders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Response Time for Complaints	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product Quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall satisfaction level with FERESPE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Also, we would like to have your testimony: just a brief summary of your experience with FERESPE.

A sua resposta

ANTERIOR SUMETER

Página 2 de 2

Nunca envie palavras-passe através dos Formulários do Google.

Figure 11 - FERESPE'S Customer Satisfaction Survey

In the first phase, 79 surveys were sent but only 19 clients answered them, (a 24% response rate). In the next phase, 44 surveys were sent and 9 clients answered them (a 36% response rate). Finally, in the third and last phase, 21 inquiries were sent and the company received 5 answers (a 42% response rate).

4.3.1 Survey Structure

The survey was divided into three parts: The first part is related to the identification of the Client - Name / Company, Function and e-mail. It was mandatory to answer. In the second part it was ascertained, using a scale of 1-4, being 1 very good and 4 very bad, the degree of satisfaction regarding the technical competence and experience, the quality of the monitoring of the ongoing projects, the time response to requests - budget requests, orders and complaints - to the quality of the product as well as to the degree of overall satisfaction. This was mandatory to answer. Respondents were able to optionally send a testimony.

Although this is not the most suitable form of structure, it is the one chosen by the company to apply.

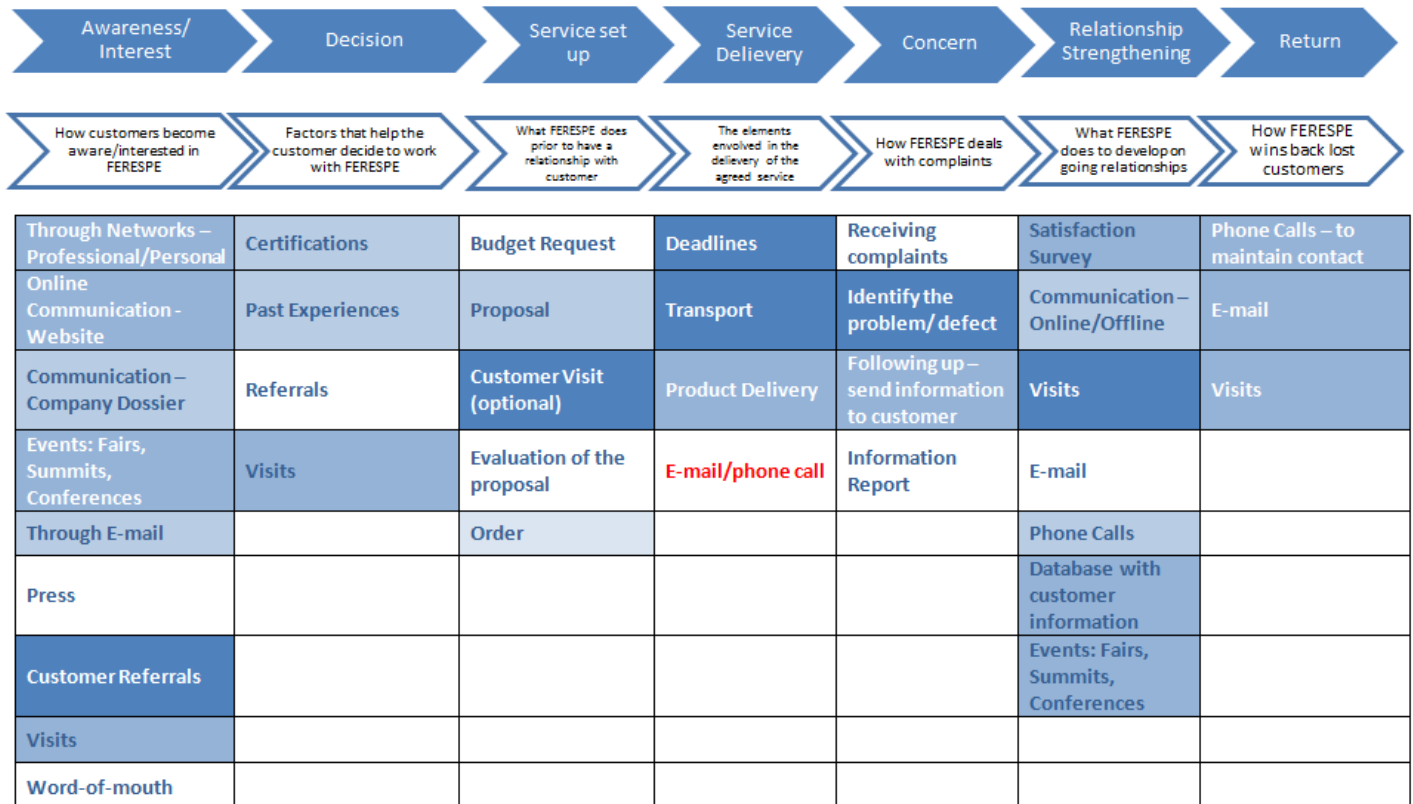
4.3.2 Global Analysis

Globally, the following results were obtained, from the surveys - in English, French and Portuguese.

From the results obtained a significant conclusion is pointed out: FERESPE's clients positively assessed the company, which means a positive degree in terms of satisfaction, as it is possible to perceive through the results presented in Appendix 2.

4.4 FERESPE'S Client Journey Map

In order to apply the proposed conceptual model, it is first necessary to create a customer journey map appropriate to the FERESPE's case so that a conclusion can be drawn to answer the research question.



Moments of truth

Critically important
Extremely important
Very important
Important

Table 2 - FERESPE's Client Journey Map

4.5 Discussion

First, it was necessary to create a CJM, in the B2B context, that was appropriate to the specific case of FERESPE since the literature did not present a model that could be fully applied.

The journey was then divided into seven different critical phases: 1. Awareness/Interest (How customers become aware/interested in FERESPE), 2. Decision (Factors that help the customer decide to work with FERESPE), 3. Service set-up (What FERESPE does prior to have a relationship with the customer), 4. Service Delivery (The elements involved in the delivery of the agreed service), 5. Concern (How FERESPE deals with complaints), 6. Relationship Strengthening (What FERESPE does to develop on-going relationships) and 7. Return (How FERESPE wins back lost customers).

The phases of Awareness and Interest usually constitute two different phases. However, in this case, it was a strategic option to join them, since in order to have an interest in a service provided or to work with FERESPE, there must be an awareness of the existence of these services in the first place.

In order to apply the proposed model, three critical phases from the CJM must be highlighted: 1. Awareness/Interest, 5. Concern and 6. Relationship Strengthening. These were the chosen stages due to their importance in terms of CRM to the company.

In the first phase - Awareness/Interest, the critical moments of truth that were identified were: The networks – Professional/Personal, Online Communication – Website, Events: Fairs/ Summits/ Conferences and by handing the Company Dossier in these events in order to make contact and to give information to possible clients, through E-mail, Press, Customer Referrals, Visits and Word-of-mouth. Indeed, customer referrals are very powerful in the

industry because this is how many contacts are made through different value chain companies (networking). Also, customer satisfaction has a positive effect on recommendation. These critical moments are used to approach the client or potential client, like for example, through communication or through e-mail, visits and presence in fairs. Plus, Communication is a crucial factor on establishing relationships. So, it is possible to state that, at this phase, the key point for the company is to engage the consumer.

Phase 5. is related to Concern. In the case the company receives a complaint, its members will have to deal with it accordingly. FERESPE deals with this situation by, first of all, receiving the complaints. Then, it identifies the problem or the defect, and then does the follow up of the complaint and send information to the customer on how the problem will be solved. Lastly, an Information Report is sent with all the necessary information. As Pfeifer (2005) sustains, “it is more affordable for a company to retain the existing customers rather than to try to acquire new ones”, so, dealing with complaints becomes extremely important in maintaining a relationship. Once more, relationship marketing is present in this stage because through communication, whether online or offline, the company can understand the clients’ needs and solve the existing problem. Evidently, successfully dealing with customer needs is one way of satisfying them and demonstrating the quality of the service provided. This consequently lead customers to trust on the work of the company as well as to commit with them. Relationship between perceived quality and loyalty exists and it is positive.

Finally, in phase 6 Relationship Strengthening, FERESPE opts for a very CRM-centric strategy using a Customer Satisfaction Survey, Communication – Online/Offline, Visits – to partners, clients or the clients to FERESPE, through E-mail, Phone Calls, Database with customer information in order to really know who they work with, Events such as Fairs, Summits, Conferences to create new relationships and to maintain the existing ones. Also, of course, through these

actions, the customer can realize the commitment of the company to their needs and how important they are to FERESPE. Clearly, all these activities positively influence all the main constructs – service quality, trust, commitment and customer satisfaction. Ultimately, it leads to loyalty.

To sum up, it is possible to support that all three main phases strive for customer retention. Phase number 1 and phase number 6 use the same techniques but in the sense of engaging the consumer and consequently achieve the main constructs. However, they are not an indicator of loyalty achievement. In phase 5, the objective is more focused on satisfaction rather than on the other dimensions. So, the outputs from Customer Journey Mapping conceded crucial insights to the Proposed Conceptual Model. After the application of this proposed model, it is possible to conclude that all constructs are intrinsically linked. Firstly, there's a high emphasis on the importance of engaging the consumer and this is done through relationship marketing. But in order to engage and maintain a long-term relationship with clients, it is important to provide a certain service quality, to make them trust in the company so that they commit and be satisfied. All these factors will lead to customer loyalty. Through the internship and the actions the trainee was involved in, it is possible to prove the application of this model because all the actions previously described in the CJM have a positive influence on all the constructs, leading to each other and ultimately to the achievement of customer loyalty.

Chapter 5

5. Conclusion

As a forward-looking company and with the entrance of a new head to the commercial and marketing department in 2015, it was preponderant to know the real current needs of the company's customers. So, the ultimate goal for the company is to answer the question: What influences customer loyalty in the FERESPE's case? It was crucial for the company to unveil the major influencers of customer loyalty in order to retain or attract new customers.

This study reinforces the importance of the components of loyalty and illustrates that, while both are important in achieving it, there are differing paths to achieving each component. To measure satisfaction, a customer satisfaction survey was conducted. The response rate was considered by the company as good - 41% - taking into consideration the sector average rate and the historical data of questionnaires carried out by FERESPE in previous years. Therefore, the degrees of satisfaction are globally positive. Most inquiries rated it as very good: Technical competence and experience (72%), Quality of the monitoring of the ongoing projects (58%) and Product quality (55%); In terms of the Response time to budget requests (67%) and the Degree of general satisfaction (52%), the inquiries evaluated them as "good". Regarding the criteria - Order response time Ordering and Response time to requests to Complaints, 3% of the respondents evaluated the company's performance as "bad". Taking into account the testimonies and opinions of the respondents, it was pointed out that the company should improve deadlines and delivery times. Nevertheless, the majority gave positive feedback, highlighting the high

competencies of the service and the quality of the relationship with FERESPE. However, the survey only measured the degree of satisfaction of their current clients. So, in order to understand the influencers of the loyalty, it was applied a model, which with the support of the literature review helps to answer the research question. In order to evaluate - service quality, trust, commitment and satisfaction of the consumers - a CJM was first created in order to divide the process into different phases. What was possible to conclude through the CJM analysis, according to the proposed model, was that all the actions created by FERESPE go towards promoting a long-term relationship with the client. This way, through various actions they somehow try to achieve the other constructs. In fact, in the chosen phases they all have important aspects of trust, commitment, satisfaction and service quality and, therefore, loyalty. Thus, the consumer loyalty in the FERESPE's case is intrinsically influenced by relationship marketing, as nowadays all clients need to feel wanted, as if they are the center of the company's attentions. So, through this case study it is possible to understand what influences consumer loyalty and its antecedents in this specific case.

In order to continue to improve customer relationships and promote future loyalty, what is proposed to the company is to conduct customer interviews to better understand each case, create a stronger presence in the social media and in the press or even among specialty magazines, and also to create a new marketing plan for the company.

The conclusions and recommendations of the present study on consumer loyalty should be understood as an important step towards the construction of a general theory, since they can be applied to a similar industrial sector.

5.1 Limitations and Future Research

On the execution of this dissertation there were found several limitations that had somehow conditioned the final results. One of the limitations of this work was the lack of marketing research done in B2B companies in this industrial sector, making it much more difficult to relate all the definitions of the main constructs to the specificity of the sector. However, the greatest constraint was that it was not possible to create a survey that addressed all the constructs used – trust, commitment, satisfaction, service quality and communication, in order to measure customer loyalty in its totality. It was only possible for the trainee to access certain information and the survey was created by the guidelines already defined by the company. Therefore, the trainee did not have the opportunity to apply a questionnaire structure appropriate to the case in question.

Future investigations should take into account a quantitative analysis so as to complete the qualitative analysis developed in the present investigation or using the main guidelines of this study to get more conclusive answers about customer loyalty.

In addition, a set of interviews to critical clients can also be carried out in order to unveil the main elements that influence their loyalty in this case.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1 – FERESPE’s Customer Satisfaction Survey (English, French, Portuguese)



STRONG CONNECTIONS

FERESPE – Customer Satisfaction Survey

*Obrigado

In order to assess your degree of satisfaction with FERESPE services, we request your cooperation in completing this survey.

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Experience and Know-how	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Monitoring of ongoing projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Response Time on Budget Requests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Response Time to Orders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Response Time for Complaints	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Product Quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall satisfaction level with FERESPE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Also, we would like to have your testimony: just a brief summary of your experience with FERESPE.


À sua resposta

ANTERIOR

SUBMITER

Página 2 de 2

Nunca envie palavras-passe através dos Formulários do Google.



STRONG CONNECTIONS

FERESPE – Enquête Satisfaction Client

*Obrigado

Afin d'évaluer votre degré de satisfaction à l'égard de nos services, nous vous sollicitons votre coopération dans la réalisation de cette enquête. *

	Très satisfait	Plutôt satisfait	Plutôt insatisfait	Très insatisfait
Expérience et compétence technique	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suivi des projets en cours	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Temps de réponse aux demandes de budget	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Temps de réponse à des commandes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Temps de réponse à des réclamations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Qualité du produit FERESPE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Degré de satisfaction général avec FERESPE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Nous aimerions compter sur votre témoignage: un bref résumé de votre expérience avec FERESPE.

À sua resposta

ANTERIOR

SUBMITER

Página 2 de 2

Nunca envie palavras-passe através dos Formulários do Google.

FERESPE - Inquérito Satisfação Cliente

**Obrigatório*

Com o objetivo de avaliar o seu grau de satisfação sobre os nossos serviços, solicitamos a sua colaboração no preenchimento deste inquérito *

	Muito Bom	Bom	Mau	Muito mau
Competência técnica e experiência	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Qualidade do acompanhamento dos projetos em curso	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tempo de resposta - Pedidos de Orçamento	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tempo de resposta - Recomendas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tempo de resposta - Reclamações	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Qualidade do produto FERESPE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grau de satisfação geral com a FERESPE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Gostaríamos ainda de poder contar com o seu testemunho: um breve resumo da sua experiência connosco

A sua resposta

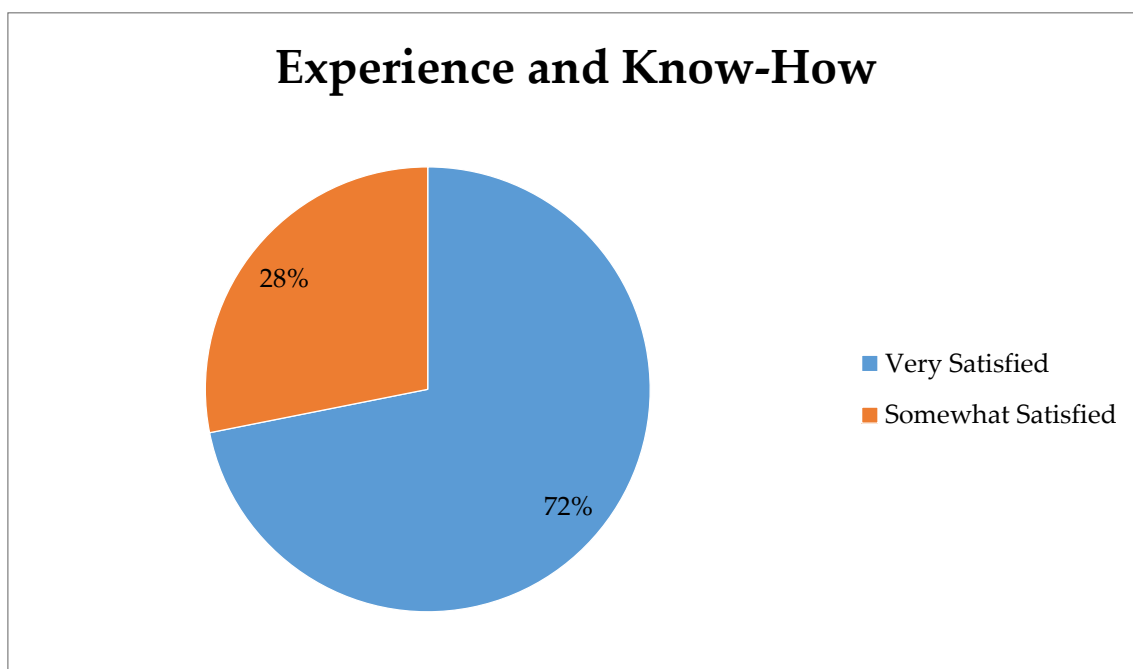
ANTERIOR
SUBMITTER

Página 2 de 2

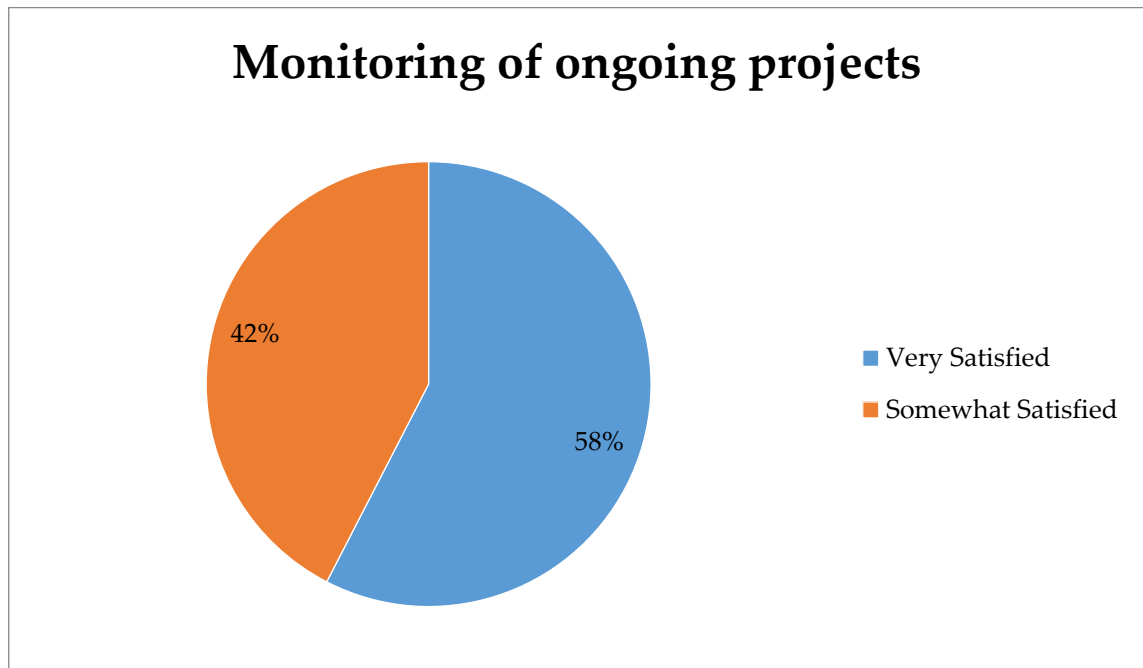
Nunca envie palavras-passe através dos Formulários do Google.

Appendix 2 – FERESPE's Customer Satisfaction Survey Global Answers

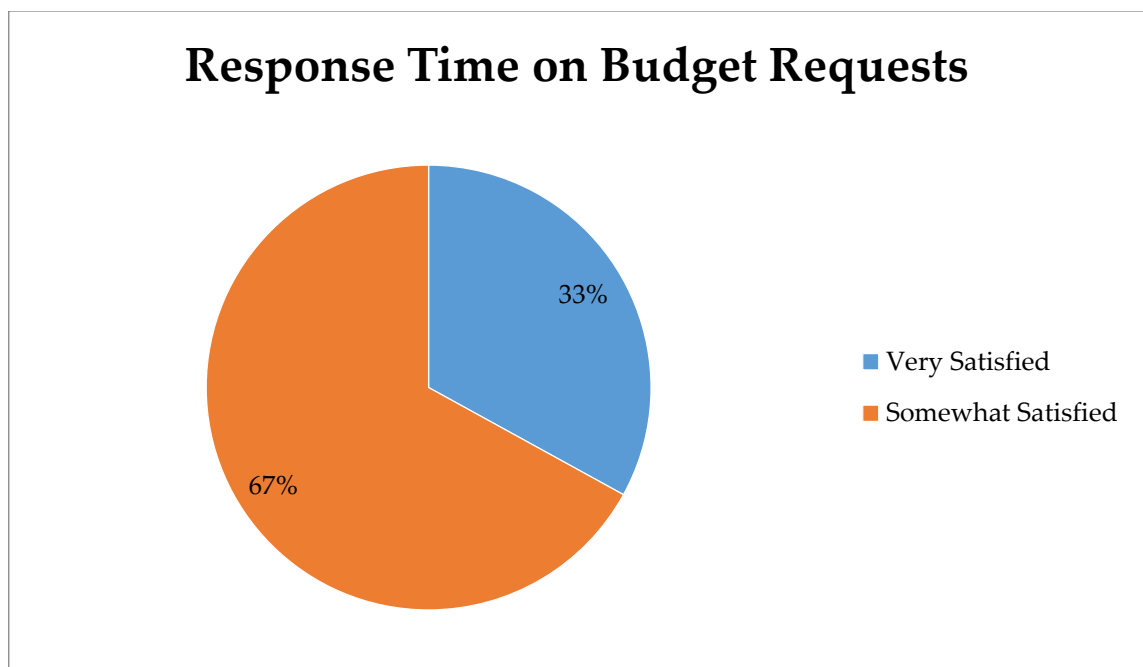
1.



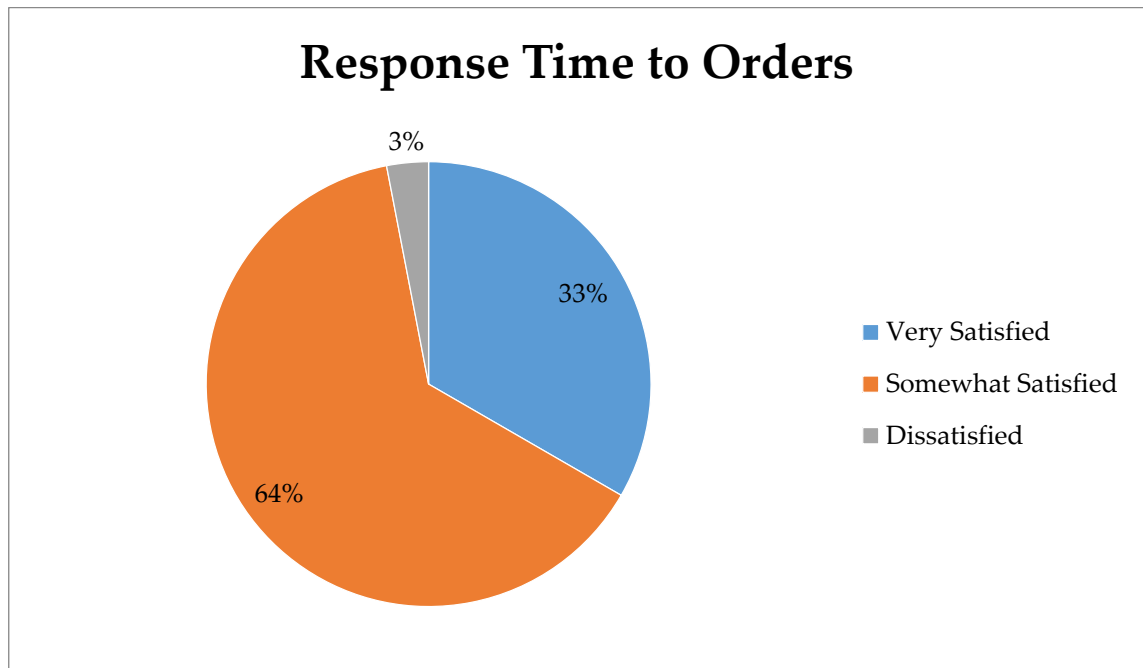
2.



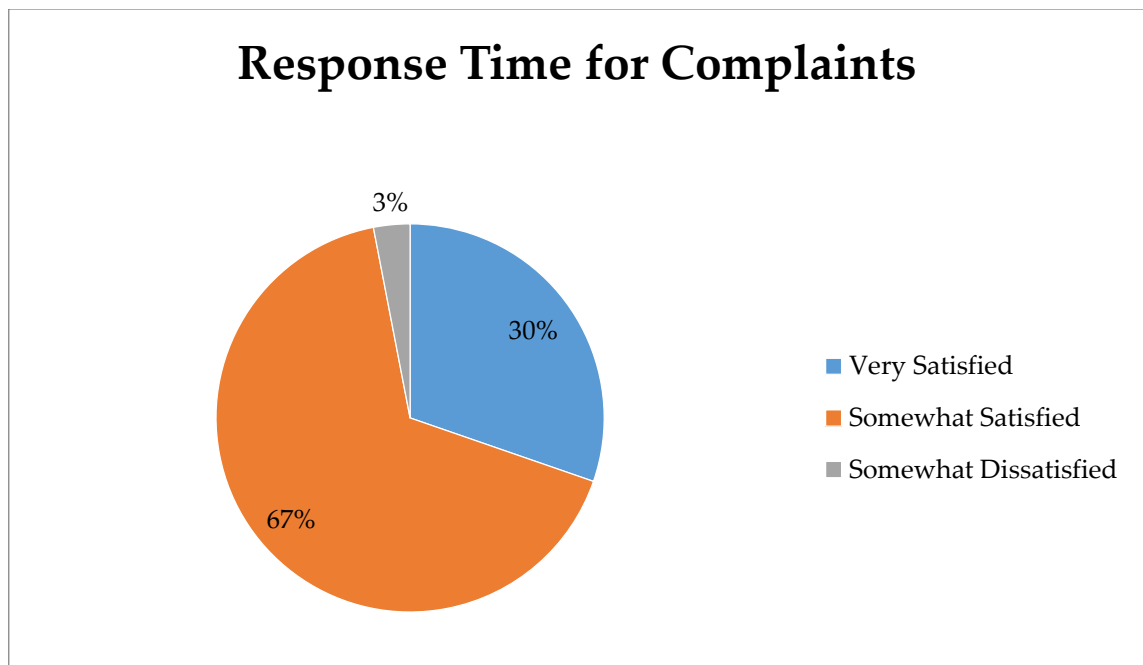
3.



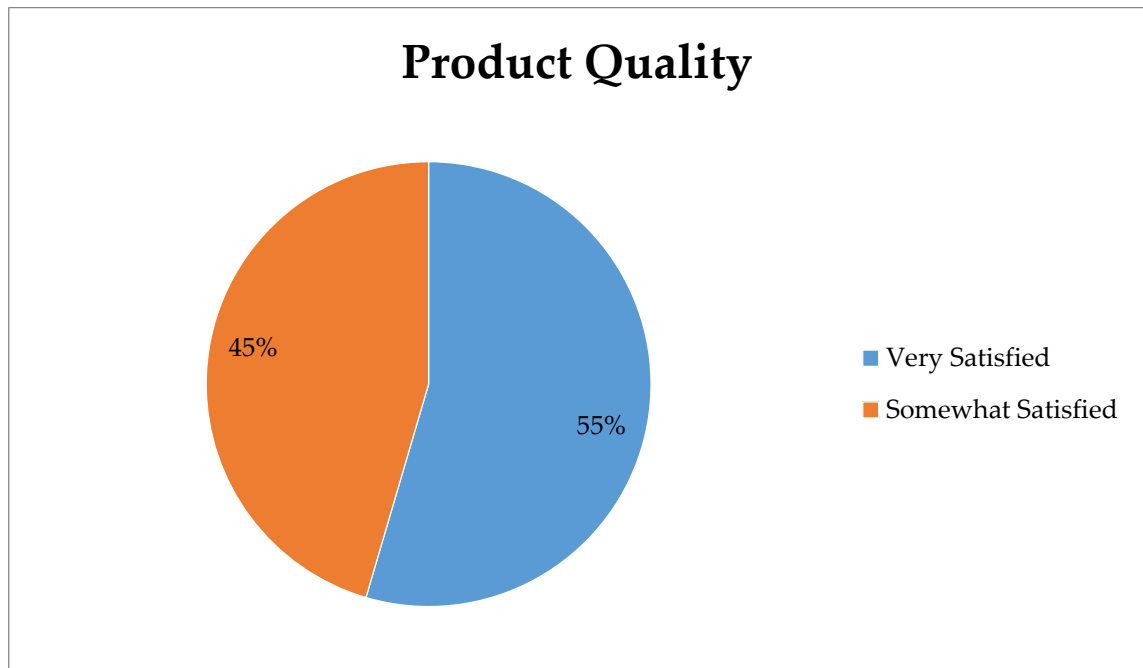
4.



5.



6.



7.

